



Ohio High School Athletic Association

Friday, December 11, 2020

Administrator Update

TO: Member Schools' Superintendents, Principals and Athletic Administrators
FR: OHSAA Executive Director's Office

Bylaw 4-4 (Scholarship) Waived Through 2020-21 School Year Per Constitution Article 6-1-9

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and after much consideration, the Executive Director's Office has elected to utilize Constitution Article 6-1-9 and **waive the scholarship bylaws found in 4-4-1, 4-4-5 and 4-4-3 for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year.** We applaud the schools that have been able to uphold these standards thus far, and each school is still permitted to continue enforcing these scholarship bylaws, or any other modified version, if you believe your school/district has implemented effective educational delivery methods which would support a student's ability to meet the bylaw's requirements. However, this decision to waive the scholarship bylaw through the school year is being made because we recognize that quarantines, differing educational models, varying access to the internet, etc. have made this a very challenging school year for our STUDENT-athletes.

With this decision, all student-athletes will be eligible for the first grading period of the 2021-22 school year (unless your district elects to uphold the standard). After that time, students will then be required to pass the appropriate number of credits/classes in order to remain eligible for the second grading period of the 2021-22 school year. Please contact a member of the compliance staff if you have any questions (Kristin Ronai, kronai@ohsaa.org, or Debbie Moore, dmoore@ohsaa.org).

NOTE: The OHSAA Office has no authority to waive ORC § 3313.535, which requires each district to set a minimum GPA standard for students to be afforded a participation opportunity.

Winter Sports General Update

As we have said over and over, we cannot thank administrators enough for all your efforts in working with our student-athletes so that they have the opportunity to participate during this most challenging time. We are also appreciative of the Governor's Office permitting our seasons to continue, while understanding that our focus is on the health, safety and well-being of our student-athletes and all participants in the interscholastic environment. The decision for schools to move forward is strictly a local decision. Schools or school districts may certainly choose not to participate in a contest or to pause their season(s) for a period and should do what is in their best interest. But we also believe our member schools provide our student-athletes with the safest possible environment to continue participating, and we all recognize the educational, physical and mental health benefits of participation.

We also want to reemphasize that our schools should **do all that they can to keep crowds to a minimum**, even going below the Ohio Health Director's Sports Order that limits spectators to the lesser of 15 percent permanent, fixed seats or 300. **Our recommendation is that you limit your crowds to parents and immediate family members.** By not being cautious and reducing the number of spectators, we are putting our student-athletes at risk of not only contracting and/or spreading COVID-19 but also risking the possibility of losing the winter sports seasons.

We will continue to study the data on COVID-19 and continue in discussions with the Governor's Office to determine if we need to make changes to our seasons. If we do, we believe we have flexibility that would allow us to look at implementing other models for our winter and/or spring seasons.

Winter Sports Ideas to Consider

Please see last week's OHSAA Administrator Update (Dec. 4, 2020) for some ideas for administrators to consider when hosting contests. These are merely ideas and an attempt to help mitigate exposure (**and we want to emphasize that these are strictly local school decisions and the OHSAA will not penalize schools that do not follow these suggestions**). The Dec. 4 Update can be found here: <https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/BulletinBoard/20201204administratorupdate.pdf>

Observer's Program Continues with Winter Sports

The OHSAA Observer's Program, originally launched in the fall at the strong recommendation of the Governor's Office, is continuing this winter. Observers attended 56 OHSAA contests last week. Observers are designated individuals who are attending contests throughout the state to ensure mandates in the Ohio Health Director's Sports Order are being followed. Observers are asked to make contact with a school's athletic administrator and/or the required Compliance Officer prior to the contest, and, throughout the contest, they may provide feedback to the school contact regarding any violations they observe. However, in general, the observers are not in attendance to police the requirements set forth by the Governor's Office . . . they are simply

there to report on what they find. The observers file reports with the OHSAA. We will review each report and share them as a tool to help schools maintain the mandates to provide a safe atmosphere and continue to provide opportunities. Here is a link to the checklist that the Observers will be using for winter sports:

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports/2020/ObserverChecklist-WinterSports.pdf>

All mandates in the Ohio Department of Health Director's Sports Order must continue to be followed for winter sports. Here is a link to the Health Director's Sports Order: <https://bit.ly/2RWa1jh>. In addition, here is a link to the Health Department's Responsible RestartOhio guidance document for sports: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Youth-Collegiate-Amateur-Club-Pro-Sports.pdf>, and here is a link to the ODH's Responsible RestartOhio guidance document for sports venues: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Sports-Venues.pdf>.

Schools are reminded:

- Participants not in the contest **ARE REQUIRED** to wear facial coverings on the sidelines.
- Participants not in the contest and on the sidelines **ARE REQUIRED** to be socially distanced (as close to six feet apart as possible).
- Outside of game play, players are **NOT PERMITTED** to have physical contact with their teammates (such as high-fives and handshakes). Coaches and other team personnel are also not permitted to have physical contact with players.
- Any spectators in attendance **ARE REQUIRED** to wear facial coverings and to be socially distanced.
- Disinfect and clean competition and high contact areas frequently.

Winter Sports Requirements, Recommendations and Modifications

The OHSAA staff has developed sport-specific requirements, recommendations and modifications for schools when conducting interscholastic competition in winter sports. Links to the sport-specific requirements, recommendations and modifications for winter sports are available here (please note that the OHSAA sport management staff sends periodic sport-specific memos to coaches and/or athletic administrators with additional updates):

Basketball: <http://bit.ly/BKRecs>

Bowling: <http://bit.ly/BORecs>

Gymnastics: <http://bit.ly/GYMRecs>

Ice Hockey: <http://bit.ly/IHRecs>

Swimming & Diving: <http://bit.ly/SDRecs>

Wrestling: <http://bit.ly/WRRecs>

Governor's Curfew Order

The new Ohio curfew Order does not mean schools must be home from their competitions strictly at 10:00 p.m., but venues/gyms need to be vacated by 10:00 followed by transportation back home. While consideration by schools and conferences/leagues should be given to move starting times for contests earlier, the new Order DOES mean it is imperative that administrators work with student-athletes and coaches to emphasize that, **once the contest ends or participants and coaches return from road trips, everyone should go home and not congregate at someone's house or a local restaurant.** Those types of gatherings have proven to help spread the virus and may play a major role in pausing a school's season.

OHSAA Provides School Form for Students Returning to Play from COVID-19

As a reminder, the Ohio Health Director's Sports Order says that a student-athlete who tests positive for COVID-19, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, shall not return to sports activities until a documented medical exam is performed clearing the individual prior to the individual returning to participate in practice or games. The exam must specifically include an assessment of the cardiac/heart of high intensity exercise due to the potential of myocarditis in COVID-19 patients. To assist the membership, the OHSAA has developed a form that schools are welcome to utilize for students who have had the medical exam to verify that the student can or cannot return to practices or games. The OHSAA form is not a requirement, but it is required that a student who has tested positive be evaluated by a physician and cleared in writing before being permitted to return to participation. If a student's physician is reticent to issue this clearance, please advise parents to seek a second opinion from another physician. This physician is not required to be a cardiologist but could be any qualified physician who is willing to conduct this evaluation. The form is also for use by the student and schools only and is not to be returned to the OHSAA. Administrators can access the form here:

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports/2020/RTPCoronavirus.pdf>

Winter Sports State Online Rules Meetings in myOHSAA

2020-21 OHSAA state rules meetings for each winter sport (basketball, bowling, gymnastics, ice hockey, swimming & diving and wrestling) have been available through the Rules Meeting icon in myOHSAA since October 14. The head coach, an assistant coach or the athletic administrator is required to complete the meeting prior to the final meeting date for each sport which coincides with that sport's tournament entry/withdraw date (**Jan. 25, 2021:** girls basketball, bowling, swimming & diving, wrestling; **Feb. 1, 2021:** boys basketball, gymnastics, ice hockey). Athletic administrators are encouraged to use the "View State Rules Meeting Attendance" link on the school's myOHSAA account to ensure their school has received credit for these meetings prior to the final meeting dates listed above as completion of the state rules meeting is required for tournament participation. Please contact membershipservices@ohsaa.org if you have any questions or need assistance.

As a reminder, a \$50 late fee will be charged to access each meeting since regular season contests in each winter sport are now permitted. If your school has not received credit for the meeting due to a late hire of the head coach, please contact membershipservices@ohsaa.org regarding the late fee prior to the completion of the meeting.

Additional Resource Available to View State Rules Meetings

Throughout the course of a sports season, we receive a number of requests from individuals asking to view the state rules meeting through myOHSAA without paying the fine (if it is after the deadline). This typically occurs when a coach not on the school's account or a non-school affiliated individual would like to view the rules meeting simply for the sake of learning more about the rule changes. To remedy this situation, our office has created a public YouTube playlist that will house copies of each state rules meeting.

Please note, neither the individual nor any affiliated school(s) will receive credit for viewing the meeting through YouTube. Individuals seeking credit must still view this meeting through their myOHSAA account. This note is also present at the start of each video within the playlist.

The playlist may be accessed through this link: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFid40HlxWrRNPxrXdZPAx4X7VXXphXzq>. If you have any questions, please contact membershipservices@ohsaa.org.

ArbiterSports and HomeTown Ticketing Partner

ArbiterSports, a recognized leader in online athletic and event management, officials' assigning and paying event workers for more than 35 years, has recently announced a new strategic partnership with HomeTown Ticketing, one of the nation's leading digital ticketing providers for schools and colleges. The partnership combines ArbiterSports' seven million-plus events per year with HomeTown Ticketing's seamless ticketing experience. Both companies are also OHSAA partners.

The new relationship will provide ArbiterSports customers with a convenient online purchasing option and touchless redemption for fans and communities. It will also satisfy athletic administrators' desire for a single scheduling portal, and all at no cost to participating schools. By utilizing both ArbiterSports and HomeTown Ticketing, schools will now be able to operate online ticketing box offices tied directly to game times and dates used to schedule contest officials.

For more information on both companies, visit arbitersports.com and www.hometownticketing.com.

Thank you for your attention to this information and for the service you are providing our student-athletes!